

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 28 October 2016 at 2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton

Mr H Humphrey

Ms E Morgan

Mr M Storey

Mr J Ward (Chairman)

Norwich City Council

Mr T Jones

Dr K Maguire

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Breckland District Council

Mr P J Duigan

South Norfolk District Council

Mr B Stone

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr B Lawn

Co-opted Member (Non-Voting)

Museum Friends

Mr J Knight

1.1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Gilmour, Mr M Kiddle-Morris, Mr T Jermy, Mr J Joyce, Miss B Palmer and Mrs V Thomas.

1.3 Tribute to the late Mr John Bracey

- 1.4 Members of the Committee stood in silent tribute to the memory of the late Mr John Bracey who had died on 26 August 2016 at the age of 93. Mr Bracey had served as the Broadland District Council representative on the Joint Committee from July 2001 to July 2015 during which time he had made a significant contribution to the joint committee. Mr Bracey's vast experience and wisdom were invaluable to the work of the Joint Committee, particularly during the years when he was Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee from July 2009 to July 2015. Mr Bracey was a much-liked and well-respected Councillor and will be sadly missed.

1.5 Welcome to Mr Tim Jones and Mr Brian Lawn

- 1.6 The Chairman welcomed Mr Tim Jones of Norwich City Council and Mr Brian Lawn of Great Yarmouth Borough Council to their first meeting of the Joint Committee.

2 Minutes

- 2.1** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2016 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1** There were no declarations of interest

4 Matters of Urgent Business

- 4.1** There were no matters of urgent business.

5 Reports of Area Museums Committees

(a) Breckland

- 5.1** The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 4 July 2016 was presented by Mr P J Duigan.
- 5.2** In introducing the report, Mr P Duigan said that the Ancient House Museum had been awarded Best Norfolk Attraction (under 50,000 visitors) at the EDP Tourism Awards for 2015. The award had helped the museum to publicise activities at target audiences.
- 5.3** The Chairman said that during the October 2016 half-term the Chapel at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse had been turned into an exhibition space for the *Collaborate* project. With the help of the Friends of Gressenhall Museum, this exhibition had featured items from a variety of disciplines including music, creative writing and academic research and had helped to support groups and individuals to gain access to workhouse stories.
- 5.4** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

(b) King's Lynn and West Norfolk

- 5.5** The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 26 September 2016 was presented by Mrs E Nockolds.
- 5.6** In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds drew the Committee's attention to the success of the 12 month teaching museum traineeship provided at the Lynn Museum through the NMS Teaching Museum Programme. She also drew attention to the West Norfolk mobile phone app that provided a directory guide to places to visit and things to do throughout West Norfolk.
- 5.7** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

(c) Norwich

- 5.8** The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 13 September 2015 was presented by Mrs J Brociek-Coulton.

In introducing the report, Mrs J Brociek-Coulton referred to the success of the *British Art Show 8*, one of the most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions in the country that was hosted by Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Norwich University of the Arts at three Norwich venues from 24 June 2016 to 4 September 2016. It was pointed out that Norwich was one of only four UK venues for the show and the closest location to London.

- 5.9** In reply to questions, the Head of Operations and Learning spoke about the work of Jen Hooker who had specialised in business development during her traineeship with the NMS. This was the first time that the NMS had provided a traineeship of this kind. Jean had researched areas of NMS income generation such as venue hire and civil ceremonies and how the service could market itself more effectively through improved product lines for retail outlets, contact lists for exhibitions and social media. The NMS would be looking to repeat the success of this traineeship in future years.
- 5.10** In reply to further questions, the Head of Museums said that the NMS was examining HLF funding opportunities for the court room at the Shirehall to be used to provide school learning activities that met with the crime and punishment component of the National history Curriculum.
- 5.11** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 Norfolk Joint Museums Service – Integrated Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2016/17

- 6.1** The annexed report (6) by the Head of Museums was received.

Members received a report that covered progress with the NMS revenue budget for 2016/17, reserves and provisions and the capital programme. The report also provided the Committee with an update on progress with the management of risk within the NMS.

- 6.2** In the course of discussion, the following key points were noted:
- Progress with NMS Revenue budgets indicated that the Service should achieve a break-even position at the year end.
 - All risks within the NMS had been carefully assessed and were well managed.
 - It was noted that the risks associated with a failure to secure future ACE funding, theft of museum objects and failure to follow data protection procedures would be updated when the risk register was next presented to the Joint Committee. Also, that the risk regarding the review of the joint museums agreement would be deleted.
- 6.3** The Joint Committee **resolved** to note –
- (a) Progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions forecast out-turn positions for 2016/17.
 - (b) Progress with the management of risk within the NMS.
 - (c) That the risk register be updated when next presented to the Joint Committee.

7 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Head of Museums was received.

The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance against the NMS agreed service plan for 2016/17, details as to museum education and learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep and other capital developments, NMS fundraising, the Arts Council England funding programme and the DCMS National Museums Review.

7.2 The Joint Committee also received on the table a copy of the NMS annual review for 2015/16 and a copy of the Museums Association code of ethics. Members recognised that the code was essential to ensure an ethical approach was taken to Museum work.

7.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- Museum visits across all 10 NMS sites for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st August 2016 had shown a slight decrease of 3% when compared to the equivalent period in the preceding year. Given that there was an early Easter in 2016 (meaning that Easter holiday visits were split between two financial years) and a very hot summer which had led to a small percentage reduction in visits to Norwich Castle over the summer holidays, and that 2015/16 represented a record year for the NMS, the total visitor figure for summer 2016 of 188,203 represented a very successful and positive result. The NMS was confident that going forward into the second half of the year that it could match last year's excellent figure of 400,000 visits across the NMS sites plus outreach and special events attendance.
- The numbers of school visits to NMS museums for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st August 2016 had shown an increase of 13% when compared to the equivalent period in the preceding year. This very strong performance when benchmarked against the total for school visits achieved during 2015/16 continued to go against the national trend.
- The good visitor figures represented a very successful summer in 2016 driven by a strong marketing performance and a successful exhibitions and events programme.
- The Joint Committee was pleased to hear that the NMS had received an initial development grant of £462,400 for the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project. This funding is helping the Service to progress its plans as well as undertaking a major public fundraising campaign.. The match-funding gap for the project currently stood at c.£2.6m. A successful Stage 2 application to the HLF will result in an additional £8.7m of funding being made available.
- The Joint Committee discussed the impact on the NMS of registry office weddings at Norwich Castle which since they had been introduced on the 1st April 2016 had led to an ever increasing number of civil ceremonies taking place. The wedding parties for these ceremonies took place on Tuesdays to Saturdays and had culminated in significant numbers of additional visitors making use of the rotunda, the museum restaurant and the museum shop. The NMS was conscious of the need to maintain the museum atmosphere of the Castle and had taken steps to ensure that arrivals and departures of wedding guests, particularly during busy periods and in bad weather conditions, did not

disrupt museum visitors.

- The Joint Committee was pleased to hear that the NMS was continuing to have a leadership role in the wider museum sector across the East of England and that this was recognised in a very positive end of year report from the Arts Council England.
- The Joint Committee viewed the very good working relationship that the NMS had with Arts Council England as essential to the development of museum initiatives and activities throughout Norfolk and beyond. The excellent programme of financial and professional support, advice and guidance that the Arts Council England provided during the current funding programme (2015-18) had led to many NMS improvements and was something that the Joint Committee wanted to see continued with the Arts Council England 4 year settlement for the period 2018-22. With this in mind, the Joint Committee fully supported and authorised the Head of Museums, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to submit an application to the Arts Council England for a four year funding settlement for the period 2018-22.
- The Joint Committee asked for an update at the next meeting on progress with the Deep History Coast project. It was suggested that this project should consider in greater detail the possibilities for building links with coastline projects wider afield than the Cromer Forest bed and, in particular, with work to interpret the cliffs at Old Hunstanton.
- The Head of Museums said that he would write to Members of the Joint Committee with details about this year's annual SHARE Museums East conference that would be held at the newly developed National Horseracing Museum at Newmarket in November 2016 and to which Members would be invited to attend.

7.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

1. To note progress regarding development of the Keep at Norwich Castle.
2. To note progress regarding development of plans for 2016/17 including the exhibition and events programme and the Service's progress in achieving a balanced budget.
3. To authorise the Head of Museums, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to submit applications to the Arts Council England for National Portfolio Organisation funding for Norfolk Museums Service and for Sector Support Organisation (Museum Development) funding for SHARE Museums East, both for a four year funding settlement for the period 2018-22. The Joint Committee fully supported the work that was being done on these very important applications.
4. The Head of Museums to write to Members of the Joint Committee with details about this year's annual SHARE Museums East conference at the newly developed National Horseracing Museum at Newmarket in November 2016 and to which Members may wish to attend.
5. To request an update at the next meeting on progress with the Deep History Coast project and the building of links between this project and coastal projects elsewhere.
6. That progress on all other museums matters should be reported back to the Joint Committee as part of the Head of Museums' periodic Performance and Strategic Update Report.

7.5 At this point in proceedings the Joint Committee considered a report on the

Collections Review and Rationalisation Programme 2015-18 that was included as an Appendix to the Performance & Strategic Update Report

7.6 The Joint Committee resolved with regard to Appendix 1 to the report:

To agree to the rationalisation of the items listed in Annex 3 to the report (Gressenhall Social History items) and Annex 4 to the report (inc. Internal transfers included for information only) that were considered and approved for rationalisation by the Breckland Area Museums Committee on 4 July 2016.

8 To receive a presentation about the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Olive Edis project

8.1 The Joint Committee received a presentation by Andrew Smith, NMS Operations Manager East, about the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Olive Edis project.

8.2 The Joint Committee heard that the project provided a unique opportunity to view the pioneering photography of Olive Edis who had worked in North Norfolk in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition to being a talented portrait photographer, Edis was also the world's first female war photographer and this exhibition showcased both her photographs of local people and celebrities alongside her record of women during the First World War and her documentary on the battlefields of Northern Europe. The exhibition was part of a wider project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund with additional support provided by Arts Council England, East Anglia Art Fund and the John Jarrold Trust. It was noted that a touring exhibition of Edis' work would be shown at community venues across North Norfolk during 2017. The exhibition runs from 8 October 2016 to 22 January 2017.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Chairman

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